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Weekend freeze but thaw on the way for the new year

29 December 2000

Release number 453

The freezing conditions will continue this weekend with ice and freezing fog a hazard for travellers. However, Met Office forecasters are predicting milder weather to spread across the country on New Year's Day, preceded by snow, especially in central and northern parts of the UK.

Ewan McCallum, Head of Forecasting at the Met Office, said: "It's been the first really nationwide wintry spell we have seen for a number of years but it shouldn't last beyond the holiday weekend. We expect a return to milder air from the Atlantic next week."

Notes:

Highlights of the weather during 2000

The most memorable weather of 2000 has undoubtedly been the record breaking rainfall - the wettest year in England and Wales since 1872 (and likely to be the 3rd wettest year on record), and the wettest April and autumn since records began in 1766, the latter bringing significant flooding to many parts of England.

Running through 2000...

The year started with the sunniest winter over England and Wales since records began in 1909.

England and Wales had the wettest April since records began in 1766. Many stations in eastern and southern Scotland also broke their rainfall records, extending back to the 1930s. Wettest spring over England and Wales since 1983.

Highest temperature of the summer, 32.8 deg C, was recorded at Coltishall in Norfolk on 19th June. The hottest June day in south-east England since 1976.

All three summer months had below average rainfall over England and Wales, but still only the driest summer since 1995.

Wettest autumn over England and Wales since records began in 1766, with 489 mm compared with the average 1961-90 amount of 252 mm.

Wettest year since 1872 and every prospect of being the 3rd wettest since records began in 1766.

South and east England have experienced the lowest number of hours of 'easterly winds' on record (i.e. since late 1940s). This is consistent with the prevailing maritime climate - wet, mild, no major hot or cold spells - that we have experienced this year.

In spite of April, July and October having below average temperatures, 2000 will be ranked about 10-12 warmest year in a series for Central England extending back 342 years. It will be cooler overall than 1999.

The coldest temperatures of the year at lowland sites have just been experienced in the Welsh Borders and the West Midlands; the temperature dropped to -14.4 deg C at Hereford in the early hours of December 29th. (There were unconfirmed reports of temperatures as low as -16 deg C in Northern Ireland on the morning of 28th December.)

The 18 cm of snow recorded at Aldergrove, Northern Ireland, on 27/28th was the deepest daily fall since records began in 1930.

For further information:
Met Office Press Office +44 (0)1392 886655

Met Office Customer Centre 0870 900 0100
If you're outside the UK +44 (0)1392 885680

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